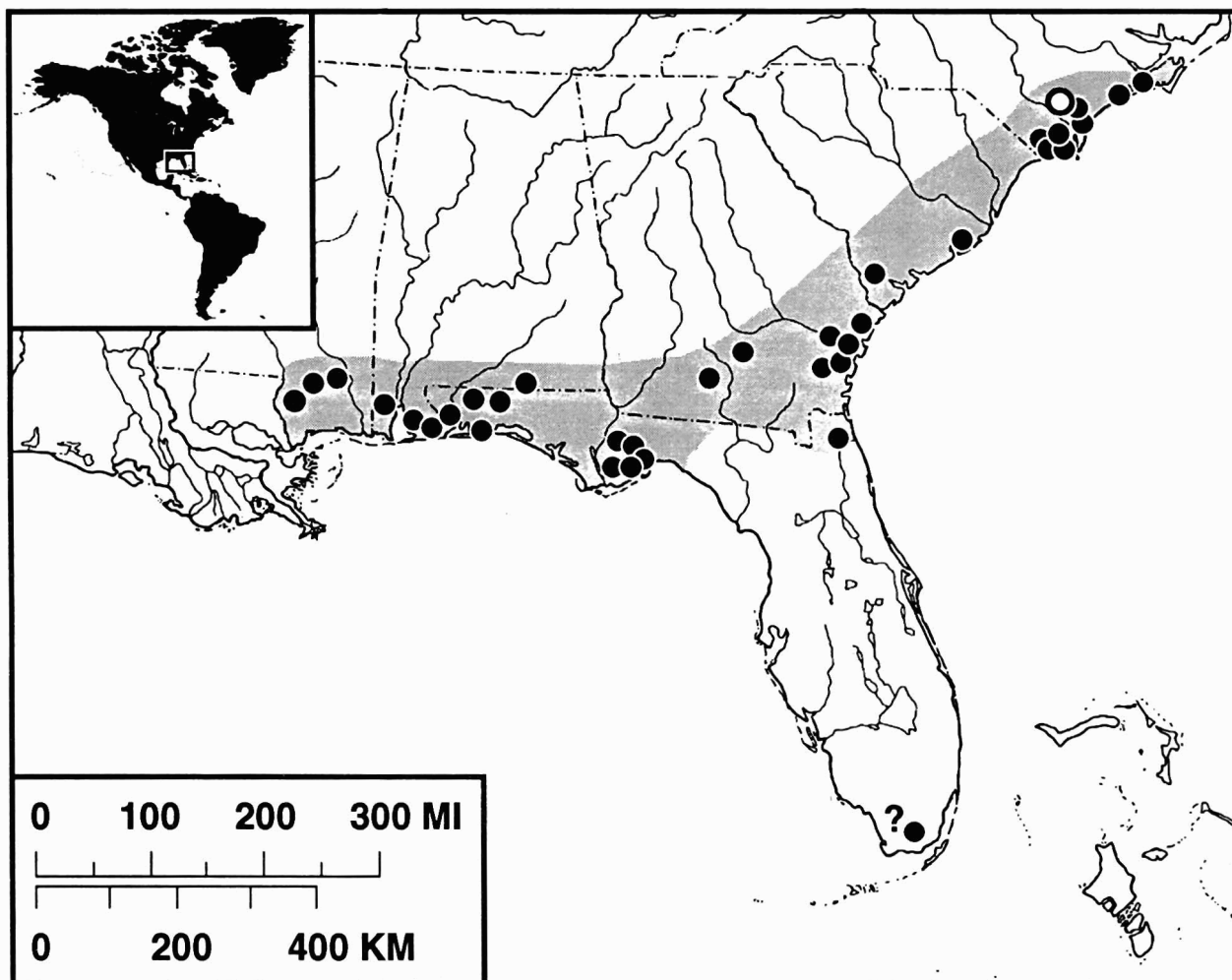


## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

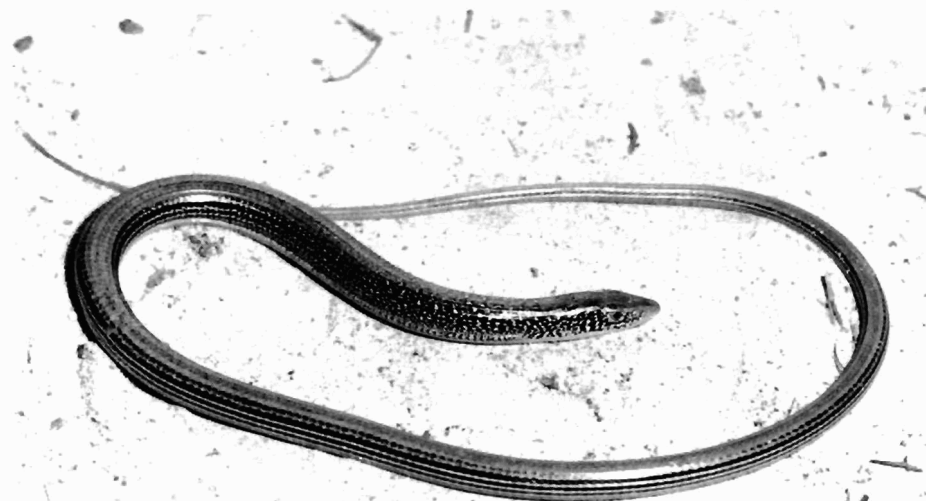
Palmer, W.M.. 1992. *Ophisaurus mimicus*.

***Ophisaurus mimicus* Palmer**  
**Mimic Glass Lizard**

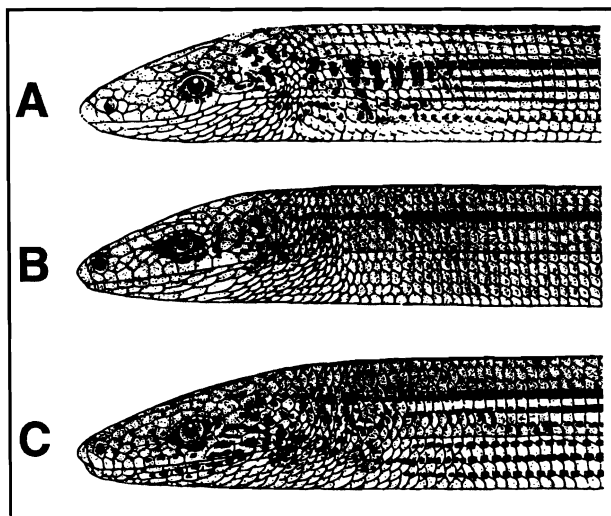
*Ophisaurus attenuatus longicaudus*: McConkey, 1954:151 (part).  
*Ophisaurus mimicus* Palmer, 1987:416. Type-locality, "on State Rt. 41, 6.4 airline km ENE of White Lake (town), Bladen County, North Carolina." Holotype, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) 129233, an adult male collected by William M. Palmer and Robert D. Clark on 28 May 1970 (examined by author).



**Map.** The large open circle indicates the type-locality, solid symbols mark other records, the question mark an uncertain record.



**Figure 1.** *Ophisaurus mimicus*, adult male (UF 74648) from Liberty County, Florida. Photo by A. L. Braswell.



**Figure 2.** Comparison of adult female (A) *Ophisaurus mimicus* (NCSM 2616, paratype), Brunswick County, North Carolina, 139 mm SVL; (B) *O. compressus* (USNM 130103), Charlton County, Georgia, 133 mm SVL; and (C) *O. attenuatus* (NCSM 15374), Brunswick County, North Carolina, 167 mm SVL (from Palmer, 1987).

• **Content.** The species is monotypic.

• **Definition.** *Ophisaurus mimicus* is a small to medium-sized legless lizard with a prominent lateral fold and a long tail. The unregenerated tail constitutes ~72-75% of the total length (TL). Fracture planes are present in the caudal vertebrae. Maximum SVL is 181 mm and maximum TL is 657 mm. The smallest mature specimen known is a male, 125 mm SVL. Scales along the lateral fold number 86-95, and scales in the middorsal row on the body number 100-108. Scale rows around the tail at the 5th subcaudal number 18-22. The frontonasal usually is divided, or the anterior scale is variously fused with one or both postinternasals. One or more supralabials usually enter the orbit or are separated from it only by small suboculars.

A middorsal dark stripe or a trace of one often is present on the body and on most of the tail. Several longitudinal dark brown or black lateral stripes or confluent spots are present on the body and most of the tail. The dark stripes are bordered by pale stripes that pass through the centers of the scales. Dark pigment below the lateral fold generally is represented by freckling or by one or more weak rows of spots or dashes. Irregular and often indistinct pale bars frequently are present on the sides of the head and neck. Large adult males especially have suggestions of pale dorsal crossbars with dark margins on the body.

• **Descriptions.** McConkey (1954) and Mount (1975) described several specimens of *O. mimicus* as aberrant *O. attenuatus*, but the original description (Palmer, 1987) is the most complete account of the species. Conant and Collins (1991) described and compared *O. mimicus* with the other species of *Ophisaurus* in the United States.

• **Illustrations.** A drawing of the lateral view of the head and anterior body of a female paratype from North Carolina appeared in the original description (Palmer, 1987). Conant and Collins (1991) provided diagrams of head and neck patterns.

• **Distribution.** *Ophisaurus mimicus* occurs in pine-dominated forests of the Atlantic Coastal Plain from southeastern North Carolina to northern Florida and westward through the Florida panhandle in the Gulf Coastal Plain to Pearl River County, Mississippi. A record from extreme southern Florida at Long Pine Key is questionable (Palmer, 1987).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Much of the historical literature which

may deal with *O. mimicus* is hopelessly entangled with that of other North American congeners because of the recent discovery of this cryptic species. *Ophisaurus mimicus* subsequently has been left out of at least one regional faunal list (Gibbons and Semlitsch, 1991), although no records exist from that far inland and the species may not occur at the Savannah River Site. Variation in scutellation and color patterns, sexual dimorphism, distribution, various aspects of natural history, and comparisons with other species of *Ophisaurus* in the Southeast were included in the original description (Palmer, 1987). The publications of McConkey (1954), Mount (1975), and Conant and Collins (1991) represent the only other literature with discernible references to this species.

• **Key to North American Species.** The following key is provided because *O. mimicus* was described after the generic account was published (Holman, 1971). This key is modified from McConkey (1952, 1954), Holman (1971), and Palmer (1987). Parenthetical numerals refer to previously published species accounts in the Catalogue.

1. Scales along lateral fold 97 or fewer ..... 2  
Scales along lateral fold 98 or more ..... 3
2. One prominent lateral dark stripe on posterior body and most of tail ..... *compressus* (113)  
More than one prominent lateral dark stripe on posterior body and most of tail ..... *mimicus* (543)
3. Conspicuous dark lines, dashes, or spots below lateral fold; pale bars absent or indistinct on sides of head and neck .....  
..... *attenuatus* (111)  
No conspicuous dark markings below lateral fold (scattered black flecks present in some large adults); young usually with distinct dark-margined pale bars on sides of head and neck ....  
..... *ventralis* (115)

• **Etymology.** The name *mimicus* (Latin, "to mimic") refers to the close resemblance of the species to *O. attenuatus* and *O. compressus*.

• **Comment.** *Ophisaurus mimicus* in North Carolina is considered a species of special concern, and specimens may be taken only under a permit issued by the State Wildlife Resources Commission.

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